DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 812 FL 020 793

AUTHOR Gee, Young
TITLE An ESL Adjunct Class for Asian American Studies.
PUB DATE [90]
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Advanced Courses; *Asian Americans; Community Colleges; Course Descriptions; *Curriculum Development; *English (Second Language); Higher Education; Interprofessional Relationship; *Language Skills; Listening Comprehension; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Reading Comprehension; Second Language Instruction; Skill Development; *Team Teaching; *United States History; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS Glendale Community College CA; *Paired Courses

ABSTRACT

Glendale Community College (California) has "paired" a social science class on "Asians in America" with a sheltered adjunct course at the advanced level in English as a Second Language (ESL). Preparation for the ESL course included observing and questioning the content area instructor on the specific skills to emphasize in materials and syllabus development, and a survey of current students in the social science class concerning the language-related skills with which they had difficulty. Instruction and exercises were designed to address each of the areas noted. These included comprehension of the teacher's presentation, grammatical structures, organization and processes of writing, and reading strategies. Communication between the content area teacher and the ESL teacher concerning specific content-related difficulties experienced by the ESL students was found to be essential to course effectiveness. It is concluded that the sheltered adjunct ESL course arrangement was useful in the community college context in motivating and challenging students. A general English language proficiency test administered before and after the course indicated gains across all tested language domains, a better result than for other ESL classes, in which students gained in some areas and regressed in others. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED352812

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Young Gee
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Young Gee/Assistant Professor
Glendale Community College
1500 N. Verdugo Rd.
Glendale, CA 91208

An ESL Adjunct Class for Asian American Studies

In 1990, Glendale Community College in Glendale, California, received federal funding under Title III to develop innovative ways to increase the success of underprepared students. This presented the opportunity for the creation of content-based English as a Second Language (ESL) for the upper level writing classes at the school. Although we called these classes "paired" or "connected," this type of content-based ESL instruction is also referred to as theme-based, sheltered, or adjunct (Snow and Brinton, 1988; Brinton, Snow, and Wesche, 1989). Each model of instruction is characterized by different degrees of language and content focus. A theme-based model has the least integration with an actual content class while an adjunct model has the most.

Although Glendale College has had a five-level, four-skill ESL program for a number of years, the connected courses were suggested as another and perhaps more effective means of improving the English proficiency of students as well as their understanding of the content material. This raised a number of questions which this study hoped to address.

1. How is a connected (adjunct) ESL class different from a non-connected ESL class?
2. How was the Glendale College adjunct class developed for the Asian American Studies class?
3. What instructional methods are different in an ESL connected class from a traditional ESL class?

To understand the differences between the connected ESL classes and the non-connected ESL classes at Glendale College, it is necessary to briefly discuss content-based instruction which has as its goal the integration of specific content, including specialized vocabulary and particular discourse modes, into the ESL syllabus. The rationale for content-based instruction rests with the idea that language acquisition can more easily occur through content mastery. Language becomes truly meaningful in the ESL class because the students are learning needed information. Using authentic language exercises and activities, language becomes contextualized in the real world, not simply in the ESL classroom.

The three most commonly used models of ESL content-based instruction are the theme-based model, the sheltered model, and the adjunct

FL 020 793

model. In the theme-based model, instruction centers around themes or topic units. This is a common format for many one-skill texts such as a listening text in which each chapter developes around a topic, for example gun control. The model is frequently used in intensive ESL programs in which each week may be devoted to different themes. The focus of the theme-based approach is on second language proficiency while the themes themselves are just vehicles to language acquisition. The second model, the sheltered approach, is commonly used in primary education of ESL students. Language is greatly simplified and the focus of instruction is on content. The instructor might be a content teacher without ESL training or an ESL teacher without complete content training. The third model, the adjunct approach, is used in higher education and is the one used for the Glendale College connected courses.

In this model, content information is taught by a qualified content teacher while ESL instruction is taught by a qualified ESL teacher. A true adjunct situation is one in which the ESL students are mixed with native English speakers in the content class and then have their own ESL class. A sheltered adjunct class differs only in that the students have a separate content class as well as the ESL class. For both adjunct types, the ESL and content teachers coordinate assignments, supplement each other in exercises, and discuss individual student needs. In this way, the focus is on both English proficiency and content mastery. The adjunct model differs most significantly from traditional ESL instruction in that authentic material, which is immediately reinforced in another academic class, is used. The content teacher uses his or her regular instructional material and the ESL teacher uses the content text or other content material as the basis for developing the course: reading, writing assignments, and grammar focus. Glendale College is using both a true adjunct class, an upper level ESL writing class paired with an American history class which began in Fall 1991, and my sheltered adjunct upper level ESL writing class paired with Mako Tsuyuki's Asians in America class which began in Spring 1991. This spring semester, Spring 1992, is the third semester of our adjuncting. Since my Spring 1991 class was the first attempt at Glendale College to pair an ESL class with a Social Science class, I felt a needs analysis had to be done before the class could begin.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that a needs analysis must determine the "necessities, lacks, and wants" of learners as well as the course objectives. Understanding the complete needs of all concerned brings the learners into the design of the syllabus and materials development. The "necessities" of the course are the required instructional objectives. These objectives had been predetermined by the Course Outlines for both the Social Science course and the ESL course. These objectives must be worked into the syllabus. The "lacks" can be defined as those skills, knowledge, or abilities that the students lack as determined by someone other than the learners. To

determine "lacks," I created a questionnaire for the Social Science content instructor, Mako Tsuyuki, to complete. His answers helped me determine what skills/areas to emphasize in my syllabus and materials development. Additionally, I listened to three of his class lectures to add my observations as an ESL professional to determine "lacks." The "wants" were determined by questionnaires given to all students in Mr. Tsuyuki's Social Science 123 classes.

The questionnaire for the content instructor focused on two areas. The first concern was to determine the weaknesses of specific skills of ESL students in his classes. His responses served as a guide for what skills needed to be emphasized in my ESL class. Generally, the speaking skills needed were to ask questions about the readings and respond to questions in class. Listening skills were important because of the rapid speech in lectures. Reading skills needed were in understanding vocabulary and main ideas. Writing skills were weak all around. The second area of concern was with skills needed for any student to receive a high grade from the course. Writing clearly and drawing main ideas from readings were very important. After meeting with Mr. Tsuyuki, I realized that new information presented in his lectures was very important. This indicated the need to include listening comprehension into my syllabus. I included listening comprehension and speaking skills by requiring students to discuss material from the content text or the writing text at each class meeting.

Although I obtained much information from the questionnaire to Mr. Tsuyuki, the needs analysis was incomplete without taking into consideration the "wants" of the learners. To determine these, the current students, both native (NS=7) and non-native English speakers (NNS=48) were asked to complete questionnaires.

Generally, the NS reported very few problems with reading and understanding content from text and lectures. However, most did not make study guides from reading assignments presumably because they had no problems in understanding. Two reported that they could do better if they could read faster.

As expected, the NNS reported many problems in all the skills. It's interesting to note that while the NNS recognized the importance of writing well, the majority reported that they could do better if they could understand the reading and lectures more. This indicated the need to develop reading and listening skills, thus my emphasis on "Reading Guides" and discussion followed by writing.

For another view to determine learner "lacks," I taped and carefully evaluated three lectures. From these, I was able to determine skill areas of concern and develop pedogogical responses for them. By far, the first major concern was in listening skills. The instructor spoke at a normal to rapid pace and in a generally even, level tone. However, he did use markers to

signal a variety of discourse events. One important marker used to signal an end of a topic or that an important piece of information was just said was, "O.K.?" in a high rising tone. This was said to double check as well as to say, "this was important!" Another verbal marker was, "got that?" This marker was used in the same way that "O.K.?" was used. A marked rise of tone signaled a new topic was beginning. The rise was for a brief period and then the instructor's tone dropped down to the even, level tone for the rest of the topic. Rhetorical questions could be distinguished from questions to be answered because the instructor consistently rephrased the question a number of times. This skill was taught to the students to recognize when a question should be answered. The instructor also tended to give many examples to illustrate his main ideas. Luckily, he often said, "(such-and-such) are examples of (main idea)." Students were trained in my class to recognize this signal. It was more difficult, however, to train the students to see the examples as merely examples to illustrate a main idea. Students tended to take notes on everything and, in doing this, missed main ideas or became unable to distinguish between main ideas and supporting details.

Another area of concern was in grammar. Conditionals, perfect tenses, and time clauses were frequently used because the subject matter delt with current issues tied to historical events. Along with these high frequency usages of grammar, the ESL students, as expected, continued to have problems with English proficiency such as correct article usage, expressions, word order, and verb tenses. Specific grammar exercises were given to develop mastery with these. I either developed these exercises drawing from content or assigned exercises in their text.

Writing is formally taught in all ESL 165 classes as part of the course, so my adjunct 165 students received instruction in matters such as proper essay organization, rhetorical modes of writing, rewriting, and research report writing. However, as is the nature of an adjunct class, writing topics were drawn from themes being studied in the SS 123 class. Joy Reid's text, The Process of Composition, was used as a reference text to accompany formal writing instruction. Reid's text included examples and exercises for each writing component being studied and these exercises were used. However, additional exercises and examples were drawn from the SS 123 text to further illustrate each writing focus. For example, in Chaper 4 of Reid, we studied coherence devices, transitions, and paragraph hooks. In addition to Reid's examples, we used the chapter being studied in SS 123 to identify these writing devices. We also did peer editing exercises to identify the writing devices or lack of them. For grammar practice, special exercises were created to include content information being studied. In terms of rewriting, students frequently revised similar ideas from essay to essay because of the nature of the similar themes in SS 123 of discrimination, assimilation, and cultural identity. I believe the SS 123 course gave a

concreteness to the notion of avoiding generalization in writing because the themes above were always supported by specific facts such as names and dates of specific laws, specific incidents of racism, etc. Thus, when the students wrote about the themes, they were really forced to mention those specific parts of history as supporting information. This repetition of being specific by necessity and revising similar ideas may have been the best aspects of the connected class in terms of developing writing. In a traditional ESL 165 class, students are also forced to revise essays, but the themes constantly change so they do not get the semester-long revising process as in the adjunct class.

In terms of reading, all colleage students are faced with comprehending difficult texts. To deal with this situation, I focused on developing skills of prereading, questioning, skimming and scanning. For prereading, I tried to include prereading questions, which were discussed in class, to every Reading Guide I prepared. These Guides were outlines of major ideas and supporting ideas in the SS 123 chapters. My intention was to make the Guides helpful as a quick summary of ideas as well as challenging as interactive exercises. Additionally, I would ask the students to make their own prereading questions in class discussion of the SS 123 chapters. To develop skimming and scanning skills, we did an exercise of dividing a chapter in the SS 123 text into sections which were assigned to small groups of students. All students had to participate. The groups of students would spend 15-20 minutes skimming the assigned section to make questions regarding information contained in the section. When the class met as a whole, each group would ask their questions and the class would have to scan the text quickly for the answers.

The skimming and scanning exercise also served as a speaking exercise. In the beginning of the class, I allowed the students to ask their questions from their desks, but later in the semester, I asked them to stand in front of the class. Speaking a foreign language in a safe environment, especially when the students are acting as the teacher/person with the correct information, empowers a speaker in that language. My hope was that this development of the feeling of being powerful in English would translate into increased English proficiency.

In addition to the four language skills, the needs analysis revealed that developing college skills of outlining and revising lecture notes were important. To practice this, I videotaped a class lecture and reviewed it with the students. First, we outlined part of the lecture as a class, and then each student completed the rest of the lecture individually. Then we discussed acceptable and confusing student outlines. Following this, I asked the students to compare their lecture notes with the outlines developed in class. Since I only did this once due to the time consuming nature of taping

part or all of a lecture, I don't really know if this was helpful, but I hope it was.

In addition to developing the course syllabus to include specific needs, the teacher of an ESL adjunct class must also develop a good working relationship with the content instructor. This is essential for the success of the ESL paired course. The teachers in the non-paired ESL 165 classes, of course, did not have this responsibility. By meeting together from the beginning of the class to build the foundation of the ESL syllabus, the content teacher and ESL teacher can develop a team spirit to reach generally accepted goals and directions. In our subsequent meetings, he asked me questions about ESL methodology, language acquisition, and student progress. I, of course, had opportunities to further sensitize him to specific language issues in his classroom. These meetings also helped to build trust and respect between our two very different disciplines. Additionally, we both realized the need to maintain frequent communication and have weekly or bi-weekly meetings. While we tried to have regular weekly meetings in the beginning to discuss students, we found that weekly meetings weren't needed and we met informally as needed. Sometimes the meetings would last much longer than we had expected (two hours) or they would be no more than ten minutes to catch up on who was doing what in their classes, how the students were progressing, or if a particular student needed help. At these meetings, I tried to guide Mr. Tsuyuki into seeing issues in terms of language rather than simply content mastery. When we could agree on some issue as language based rather than content based, I could affect his class. For example, after Mr. Tsuyuki gave his first test, we met to discuss the problems the students experienced. I was quite frank with him about comments from the students. Most said that vocabulary in the test was difficult or unfamiliar and that they simply hadn't had enough time to finish it. In other words, they spent more time trying to understand the questions than answering them. We also discussed how students did and how they could perform better for later tests. I suggested using simpler vocabulary and sentence structures in the explanations and test items, giving more examples, grouping similar test types together, and especially, allowing enough time for ESL students to finish what would take native English speakers less time. For example, one test included a multiple choice section and an essay section. I let him know that most students did poorly in the essay because of time limitations. I suggested splitting the test into two days if one part is an essay question because ESL students need more time to write. He agreed to do this in his next test.

Conclusion

Courses are commonly designed around the needs of only the course requirements as stated in the Course Outline. ESL 165 was designed as an advanced reading and writing class, but the needs analysis indicated that

stressing the four skills must be included in the adjunct syllabus design and materials development. Hopefully, this ESL 165 connected course has shown a truer picture of what must be included to help the students be as successful as possible.

The connected class has motivated my students because what they studied was authentic college material taken from a real college class. The adjunct concept brought an immediacy, or a concreteness, to my class. I saw great improvement in many of my students' writing because of the challenge of revising and rethinking the themes of SS 123 for two different teachers. This revision process is crucial for the writing process and the students were forced to do the revising over and over due to the similar themes in the social science class.

One major drawback of tying the ESL course design too closely to the content course is the possibility that the text will change or the content course itself will change somewhat. These concerns can be addressed by developing ESL material free from any specific text but still focusing on content specific vocabulary and general themes. For example, we could have an ESL adjunct class about Social Science. I believe this was a weakness of my ESL 165 connected course.

Another important issue to consider is evaluation. Should you use a pre-test/post-test model? Does someone have the expertise and equipment to conduct more robust tests? Should you have writing holistic testing? Who will be the control groups? In short, is an adjunct class more effective in increasing English proficiency of students than traditional ESL classes? To address this question, I administered a pre-test and post-test to my Spring and Fall 1991 adjunct classes. In the Spring 1991 administration, two regular ESL 165 classes were also tested. In the Fall 1991 administration, three other ESL 165 classes were tested. For both semesters, the pre-test was administered during the second week of instruction and the post-test was administered in the last month of instruction. The test used was a retired form of the Michigan English Language Proficiency Test which tests grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. As the name states, the test is a general proficiency test, so it is meant to measure a general understanding of English. I will list mean scores for each class and average gain scores with a "+" to indicate a gain or a "-" to indicate a loss. Please note that these numbers are not meant as definitive proof of any relationships between the connected course and increased English proficiency. Rather, these numbers are merely the gain or loss in the pre-test and post-test average scores. However, it must be noted that my ESL 165 class was the only class that showed gains across all tested language domains in the Spring 1991 administration.

Spring 1991 Administration

ESL Class 1		Grammar	Vocabulary	Reading
N=12	Pre-test: X=	21.58	18.42	8.75
	Post-test: X=	22.67	19.58	6.42
	Gain or Loss=	+1.09	+1.16	-2.33

ESL Class 2		Grammar	Vocabulary	Reading
N=23	Pre-test: X=	19.22	15.52	6.74
	Post-test: X=	18.39	16.43	8.57
	Gain or Loss=	-0.83	+0.91	+1.83

My ESL Class		Grammar	Vocabulary	Reading
N=18	Pre-test: X=	20.33	16.22	9.56
	Post-test: X=	21.39	16.94	9.67
	Gain or Loss=	+1.06	+0.72	+0.11

While these results may not be statistically significant because of the low number of students tested (N=53), they do indicate that students in the ESL 165 connected course improved their language skills across the three domains without being in a traditional ESL course. Conversely, the students in the traditional ESL classes gained in some areas but regressed in others.

The pre-test and post-test I administered to the Fall 1991 classes again showed that the connected course students advanced in overall English proficiency while students in two of the three other ESL classes advanced in some areas but regressed in others.

Fall 1991 Administration

ESL Class 1		Grammar	Vocabulary	Reading
N=11	Pre-test: X=	20.64	18.73	9.64
	Post-test: X=	21.45	18.45	9.18
	Gain or Loss=	+0.81	-0.28	-0.46

ESL Class 2		Grammar	Vocabulary	Reading
N=7	Pre-test: X=	25.71	19.57	11.29
	Post-test: X=	26.57	22.86	10.57
	Gain or Loss=	+0.86	+3.29	-0.72

ESL Class 3		Grammar	Vocabulary	Reading
N=18	Pre-test: X=	20.56	15.72	8.82
	Post-test: X=	21.56	17.0	9.24
	Gain or Loss=	+1.0	+1.28	+0.42

My ESL class		Grammar	Vocabulary	Reading
N=11	Pre-test: X=	23.09	18.91	11.45
	Post-test: X=	24.45	20.45	11.64
	Gain or Loss=	+1.36	+1.54	+0.19

Although my ESL class again showed gains across the three language domains, it is interesting to note that ESL Class 3, a traditional ESL class, also showed gains. Using this information, a claim cannot be made that the connected course was more effective than a traditional ESL course in increasing English proficiency. However, a claim can be made that the connected course was as effective as the traditional ESL classes in improving English proficiency. Whether the students in the connected ESL course performed better in the content course than other students is another important question which, unfortunately, is beyond the scope of this paper.

Yet another issue is program continuation. How will you obtain teacher stipends to start the program? If you are able to obtain seed money, will the teachers be willing to continue without stipends? How will the material be kept for future use? Should you expand your adjunct class to other content areas? There are many questions to consider.

Nonetheless, content-based instruction may be the ideal method for English as a Second Language instruction at the community college level. Students at this level are above survival ESL needs and the academic demands placed on them from regular content classes, which are usually taken in addition to ESL classes, are taxing. While traditional ESL classes serve to bridge the linguistic gaps between the students' first and second languages, the focus is on language and not content. Content-based ESL classes, where language is the vehicle to content mastery, is an effective way to assist students with the transition to regular content courses.

References

Brinton, D., Snow, M. A., and Wesche, M. (1989). Content-based second language instruction. New York: Newbury House.

Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987). English for specific purposes: A learning centred approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Snow, M. A., & Brinton, D. (1988). The adjunct model of language instruction: An ideal EAP framework. In S. Benesch (Ed.), Ending remediation: Linking ESL and content in higher education (pp. 33-52). Washington, DC: TESOL.